
Judiciary Committee

HB 1150

Title: An act relating to dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to dangerous dogs.

Sponsors: Representatives Kirby, Campbell, Simpson and Murray.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that a dog's breed is not a determining factor when declaring a dog potentially dangerous or dangerous.
- Provides that a dog may not be considered potentially dangerous based on infliction of injury to a person who is committing a tort on the owner's premises, tormenting the dog, or committing a crime.
- Reduces the required amount of the surety bond or liability insurance for owners of dangerous dogs from \$250,000 to \$100,000.
- Clarifies that wolf-dog hybrids are included in the definition of "dog."

Hearing Date: 1/26/05

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

Dangerous dogs and potentially dangerous dogs are regulated under state law and may also be regulated under local law. A dangerous dog is one that: (1) Inflicts severe injury on a human without provocation; (2) kills a domestic animal while off the owner's property; or (3) is already declared a potentially dangerous dog due to injury to a human, and again bites, attacks, or endangers the safety of humans. A dog cannot be declared dangerous for inflicting an injury to a person who was committing a tort on the owner's premises, tormenting the dog, or committing a crime.

A potentially dangerous dog is one that, when unprovoked: (1) Bites a human or domestic animal; (2) chases a person in public or approaches a person in public in a menacing fashion; or (3) has a known propensity to attack, cause injury, or threaten the safety of humans or domestic animals. Potentially dangerous dogs are regulated only at the local level.

State law requires owners to register dangerous dogs and imposes a number of other requirements on owners of dangerous dogs. These requirements include a proper enclosure for confining the dangerous dog, adequate posted warnings on the premises, and a surety bond or liability insurance of at least \$250,000 insuring the owner for any personal injuries inflicted by the dangerous dog.

A local government may impose additional restrictions on dangerous dogs, including not allowing the possession of dangerous dogs within its jurisdiction.

Summary of Bill:

The breed of a dog cannot be used as a factor to declare a dog potentially dangerous or dangerous.

A dog cannot be declared potentially dangerous based on the dog threatening or injuring a person who at the time was: 1) committing a tort upon the premises of the dog's owner; 2) tormenting, abusing, or assaulting the dog, or had done so in the past; or 3) committing or attempting to commit a crime.

The amount of the surety bond or liability insurance that must be obtained by the owner of a dangerous dog is reduced to \$100,000.

Wolf-dog hybrids are considered "dogs" for the purposes of the dangerous dog chapter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.